

1999 Annual Report Executive Summary

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone

Executive Summary

The Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone Corporation (RGVEZC) is beginning its sixth year of operation. The RGVEZC continues to maintain valley-wide involvement of public officials and business interests. However the "grass-roots" inverted pyramid approach or bottoms-up process, we feel strongly, is the key factor to our success. New alliances and partnerships in the region continue to be nurtured, solidifying the successful implementation of the RGVEZC Strategic Plan. To capture the over all progress of the RGVEZC, we have highlighted prior year accomplishments before reviewing last years successes.

Prior year highlights

- 1994 - Federal designation
- 1995 - Federal and state memorandum signed, CEO hired, corporate office established
- 1996 - Lean staff hired, over 40 projects are developed and implemented
- 1997 - Corporate accountability and fiscal responsibility strengthened
- 1998 - Corporate capacity is solidified

1999 highlights

RGVEZC has remained focused on the implementation of the strategic plan as evidenced

by the following:

- December 31, 1999's benchmark reports reflect over 81 benchmarks \$35,751,000 of original \$40 million has been allocated
- Sub-Zones revisited the original benchmarks to review movement or lack of
- Sub -Zones hold forum to re-prioritize needs staying within the original 10 priority needs identified in the original strategic plan
- Upon identification of to priority needs, RFPs are developed, advertisements published, and bidders conferences are scheduled
- RGVEZC develops a draft progress report "A Five Year Review: The Return on our Investment"
- A Board of Directors retreat takes place to revisit the vision and mission of the corporation as well as other issues such as sustainability and regionalism
- RGVEZC is the first rural EZ to host the 1999 Fifth Annual White House Community Empowerment Conference with over 750 delegates attending
- RGVEZC has taken the lead in moving forward the Southwest Border Region Partnership (SBRP) a regional initiative
- President Clinton announces Executive Order # 13221 establishing the President's Interagency Task Force on the Economic Development of the Southwest Border, a direct result of the SBRP

The leadership of the Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone Corporation regional board of directors and the CEO will address critical challenges this coming year. Some of these challenges include lack of human and organizational capacity, needing to do more with less, solidifying new partnerships,

identifying resources, and addressing regional issues. The challenges will be great but the "Opportunities" will be even greater.